



BACKPACKS = EDUCATION + HOPE!

CUT OFF FROM THE WORLD

Maria and Lazar and their 2-year-old brother are the only children in a tiny remote Bulgarian village, located at the end of a narrow, steep road. The village's population is about 100. The nearest school is in another village, some 15 km away. A bus run by the municipality collects them every morning at 7:00 am and brings them home at 5:40 pm.

In the winter, when there is a lot of snow, the bus cannot reach their village and they are cut off from travelling to school.

"I love school," said Maria. "I like all the subjects we study there, especially math, Bulgarian and English. At After School club [run by MWB], we read, go over our school lessons and do homework for the next day. I also have friends I play with there."

"Lazar is not so keen on studying," their mother Snezhana shared. "He really loves animals. He rides the two horses we own, takes them to drink water, and looks after the goats. He also loves taking care of the dogs."



"School is OK," Lazar said. "I don't like math but I love reading. We don't have any books at home – mum and dad have no money to buy us any. In class I heard the story of the Three Little Pigs and I really want to read it from a book."

THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN

Lazar is very hard-working and although he is only nine, he already earns money by taking care of the neighbors' cows and goats.

He knows what he wants to be when he grows up: a veterinarian. As for Maria, she wants to be a teacher and help children learn how to read and write.

Without an education, however, the children's prospects are not promising.



Far too many children growing up in poverty in Eastern Europe drop out of school to help their parents earn money or to do chores at home.

For families battling to survive, continued school attendance can become too much of a challenge.



Your donation of just \$50 can bring HOPE to the hopeless!

STRUGGLING IN POVERTY

Father Asen is trained as a mechanic but is unemployed. Snezhana has a temporary, part-time job, with wages that do not meet all the family's needs.

"Our greatest desire is to work & support ourselves," said Snezhana. *"In our situation, money is always the greatest problem."*

Fortunately, there is now hope as they are enrolled in MWB's Families -in-Crisis program, which means donations received from supporters like yourself goes towards assisting families on their journey towards self-sufficiency. As we help the family and work with them to prioritize their children's education, our hope is to see the cycle of poverty broken once and for all.

"This family is in one of the worst situations. Their village is cut off from the world," said Emil, their MWB family coordinator for the area. *"There is no transportation at all apart from the bus that takes the children to school. The parents are unemployed because there is no transportation for them to the nearest town. Every day begins with challenges, the most urgent of which is to provide food for the family. This is a constant, daily struggle."*

"We often send the children to school without money to buy food. They feel awful watching their classmates eat their breakfast and we, as parents, feel even worse for not being able to provide for them," admitted Snezhana.



Coordinator Emil giving new backpacks filled with school supplies to the children

WITHOUT EDUCATION, THERE IS NO HOPE

"At this stage our efforts are focused on having a positive impact on the parents and convincing them of the importance of education for their children," said coordinator Emil.

"We want to make sure they won't keep Lazar and Maria home from school when they face difficulties, and by providing for their urgent needs, we try to remove all obstacles for attending school. At the moment, the children do not realize the importance of education. For them, school is the place where they meet friends and enjoy playing together."

Their mother, Snezhana, agrees: *"Education is very important and that is why we insist they go to school, no matter how far or difficult it may be. We are very thankful to the Mission because they regularly support us with food parcels and clothes, shoes and school supplies. The children also received backpacks with all their necessary school items. This is a great help for us. If it weren't for Mission Without Borders, we wouldn't be able to buy these things. I would like to thank all sponsors, and wish them all the best for their kind hearts and sympathy for people like us."*



The kids with their baby brother & mother in front of their home

This month we are highlighting the need for funding items like backpacks and school supplies, so desperately needed for children living in extreme poverty in Eastern Europe. **What can you give today?**

Bonnie
Bonnie Borowetz
MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS CANADA



Use the Reply Form to donate, or call today



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All donations will be used for MWB-approved programs and projects; remaining funds will be used to fund other programs in areas of greatest need.